

JUSTIFICATION
BY
FAITH:
OR,
A CONFUTATION
Of that
ANTINOMIAN ERROR,
That Justification is before Faith;
BEING
The SUM & SUBSTANCE

Of a SERMON Preached at SARUM;
By Benjamin Woodbridge, Minister of Newberry in
BARESHIRE.

May 26. 1652.

Imprimatur, Edmund Calamy.

GAL. 3. 16.

*We have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be
justified by the Faith of Christ.*

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Christian Reader,



His Doctrine of the Gospel concerning the Justification of a believing Sinner (because it exceedingly illustrates the glorious riches of Gods free Grace, and magnifies his Justice, because it is the onely support of comfort to a wounded conscience, and takes away from man the cause of boasting, and is so much above the invention and credulity of reason) is most plainly delivered, and often inculcated by the holy Ghost in Scripture, in that we learn all the causes of Justification. The efficient, God; The inwardly movings, his rich mercy, great love; The meritorious, Iesus Christ; The material, the obedience of Christ; The formal, the imputation of Righteousness without Works; The instrumental, by which it is received, Faith; The final, the glory of the grace of God, and the Salvation of the believing Sinner.

Rom. 3 24,
25. 26.

This Doctrine hath in all ages been opposed, observed, sometimes by manifest enemies, and that you may know professedly, sometimes by professed friends, and such as would be accounted the great pleaders for Free Grace.

What Errors Papists, Socinians, Arminians, erre in this weighty Doctrine, I relate not; This short and learned discourse which thou art presented with, deals not with these, but with Antinomian Error.

It is a true observation of godly Mr. Shepheard, Mark those men that deny the use of the Law to lead unto Christ, if they do not fall in time to oppose some main point of the Gospel: For it is a righteous thing, but a heavy

Sound belie-
ver. p. 96.

To the Reader.

heavy plague, for the Lord to suffer such men to obscure the Gospel, that in their judgements zealously dislike the use of the Law: *This thing these men have done, asserting That all the elect before their Conversion and Faith, stand actually reconciled to God, and justified before him: A strange Assertion (as reverend Dr. Downham rightly terms it) to be uttered by a godly man.*

Covenant of
Grace. p. 292.

This is the Opinion in this Treatise insisted, and proved contradictory to Scripture, fit only 1. To sempillow under the elbows of prophane men: 2. To overthrow the comfort of Believers, destroying the ground, nature, use and end of Faith.

Prefat. in op.
Episcopij:

Circallinus judges the difference amongst Christians in this Point of Justification, of so small consequence, as that they ought not to breed a controversie: But Reader, When the glory of God and comfort of thy soul lies at stake (as in these matters) do not thou think it then that men wrangle about a Goats weat, or that the matter does not concern thee.

Thou art beholding to the learned Author for the penning of this Tract; but far the publishing of it, to another, into whose hands it came: That thou mayest read it and weigh it without prejudice, and praise him, is the Prayer of

James Cranford

Justification



Justification by Faith.

Worthy Sir,



According to your desire & my own promise, I here send you the Copy of the Sermon which I Preached lately at Salisbury, against the Opinion so much prevailing amongst you of Justification before Faith: I have made several Additions to several Arguments, and annexed a large Answer to the two Arguments which Mr. Eyre made use of against me, after the Sermon was ended: The Introduction to the Text, and the Applicatory part of the Sermon, I shall not trouble you with, but onely with that which is Doctrinal and Controversial.

HAVING then read those words in *Romans 5. 1.* The Point observed was this, *That we are justified by Faith.*

To write down all the places that give evidence to this Truth, were to transcribe almost the whole New Testament, *Gal. 2. 16. We have believed in Jesus Christ, that we may be justified by the Faith of Christ,* where Justification is expressly made a consequent of Faith: And as Glory follows Justification, so doth Justification follow Vocation unto Faith, *Rom. 8. 30.*

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and *Righteousness* (saith the Apostle) *shall be imputed unto us if we believe*, *Rom. 4. 24.* so *Acts 10. 43.* and *13. 39.* and *26. 18.* with multitudes of other places.

The onely Answer which is given to these and the like Texts, is this, That by Justification we are to understand, a Justification in the Court of Conscience, or the Evidence and Declaration of a Justification already past before God; so that Faith is said to justify us, not because it doth justify us before God, but because it doth declare to our Consciences that we are justified: Against which Gloss I have several things to oppose.

1. That it is a contradiction of the Holy Ghost. It is well known that the Apostle, in the Epistle to the *Romans* and to the *Galatians*, sets himself on purpose to assert the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, in opposition to Works: The question between him and the Jews was not, Whether we were declared to be justified by Faith or Works; but, Whether we were justified by Faith or Works in the sight of God, or before God; and he concludes, That it is by Faith and not by Works: Thus *Rom. 3. 20, 21. Therefore by the deeds of the Law, there shall no flesh be justified* (in his sight:) But now *the righteousness of God without the Law is manifested*; &c. The righteousness of God without the Law, is the righteousness of Faith; and by this we are justified in the sight of God, and not by the deeds of the Law. Again, *Gal. 3. 11. But that no man is justified by the Law* (in the sight of God) *it is evident, For the just shall live by Faith*; where the Argument is clearly this, If we are justified by Faith in the sight of God, then we are not justified by Works in the sight of God: But

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we are justified by Faith in the sight of God, *For the Just shall live by Faith: Ergo*, not by Works: From which places we may safely infer, that where else the Apostle speaks of Justification by Faith in opposition to Justification by Works, he is to be understood of Justification before God, or in the sight of God, and not only of Justification in our own Consciences.

2. It is also a most unsound assertion, that Faith doth Evidence our Justification before Faith: The word (Evidence) may be taken improperly, as signifying no more then an Argument; and so Faith may be said to Evidence Justification, as an effect doth argue the cause: As laughing and crying may be said to evidence reason in a childe, not that it is necessary they should evidence it to the childe it self, or to any body else; but because they are Arguments affected to prove, That Reason must be where they are: If Mr. *Eyre* will say that Faith doth evidence Justification after this maner; then

1. Justification by Faith is not necessarily so much as a Justification in Conscience; for as a childe may laugh and cry (actions that will argue reason in the subject where they are) and yet not have the evidence or clear knowledge that himself hath reason; so may it be supposed, that a Christian may have Faith (which will argue Justification) and yet not have the evidence that himself is justified: We know by daily experience, that many Christians have that in them, which if it were rightly understood, would prove that they are justified; whiles yet they want the evidence of this Justification within themselves, their consciences for long time together accusing and condemning them, whiles there is ground and reason that they should excuse and absolve them.

them. 2. If Faith evidence Justification as an effect of it, then may we as truly be said to be faith'd by our Justification, as to be justified by our Faith, and we must invert the order of the Gospel; and instead of saying, Believe and thou shalt be justified; we must say henceforward, Thou art justified, therefore believe. 3. It will unavoidably follow that we are justified by Works as well as by Faith; forasmuch as our Adversaries themselves I think will not deny, that Works are an effect of their supposed Justification as well as Faith: I am sure *Christ redeemed us, that we should be zealous of good Works*, Tit. 2. 14. And whether these Works be the first effect or the second, and by consequence the first evidence or the second, is not at all material in this case; because the Apostle, when he denies Justification by works, he excludes works altogether, *Rom. 3. 28. & 4. 5.*

But I suppose this is not Mr. Eyre's meaning; the word (Evidence) therefore may be taken more properly, and so Faith may be said to evidence our Justification, either Immediately and Axiomatically, or Remotely and Syllogistically. Faith doth evidence Axiomatically, as it is an assent to the truth of a Divine Testimony, concerning such or such a thing: Thus the Apostle saith, that Faith doth evidence to us, That the world was framed by the word of God, *Heb. 11. 1, 3.* to wit, as it is a firm assent to the Divine Testimony of Scripture, *That God made the Heavens and the Earth.* And thus Faith must be said to evidence Justification Axiomatically, as it is an assent to this Proposition, *I am justified*: But thus Faith cannot evidence Justification. For first, There is no such thing written, *Ergo*, It cannot be evidenced by Faith immediately; Where doth

doth the Scripture say, Thou *Paul*, or thou *Peter*, or thou *Thomas* art justified? And where there is no Divine Testimony, there can be neither Object nor Evidence of Divine Faith. It is the carnal, presumptuous, damning Faith of the world, to believe that they are justified by an Axiomatical assent, though they do not come within the compass of any general Truth or Promise, from which they may infer such a particular conclusion. 2. The Faith by which we are justified, is the Faith which the Apostles and Ministers of the Gospel are to Preach to the whole world, and to press upon their Consciences, *Acts* 20. 21. and 13. 38, 39. But we cannot press it upon every man in the world, to believe that he is justified, and that if he doth not believe this he shall be damned, unless we should press men to believe a lie: of all men Mr. *Eyre* cannot do it, unless he would persuade men to believe himself to have Preached falshoods in all the Sermons which he hath formerly made against the avouchers of Universal Redemption; *Ergo*, Faith doth not evidence Iustification Axiomatically.

Nor yet can it evidence our Iustification Syllogistically: Such a Syllogistical Evidence is the Evidence of a particular Conclusion, drawn out of some general Proposition by the discourse of Conscience, in which way a Believer doth evidence his Iustification, by the discourse of his Conscience after this or the like maner: *He that believeth is justified*. But (saith the Conscience) *I believe*: Therefore (saith the same Conscience) *I am justified*. The two first Propositions of which Syllogism (which they call the *major* and *minor*) must first be evidenced, before Faith can bring in the main Evidence

Evidence which lays in the conclusion: I affirm then, That it is impossible for a man by Faith, to evidence Syllogistically that he is justified before Faith, because there cannot be found out a *Medium* before Faith it self, that will agree with both parts of the Question, and so there will be always wanting a *major* or *minor*, and the conclusion (in which lies the strength of the Evidence) cannot follow: For all particular Conclusions of personal Justification, must be drawn out of some general Promise or Proposition which Faith doth first assent to and evidence, before it can bring in the Conclusion; which universal Proposition must contain that sort or kinde of persons, of whom Justification may be affirmed: But there is no sort or kinde of persons, of whom Justification may be affirmed Universally, but onely such as do believe, which I prove thus; All the world is distributed into Believers and Unbelievers, *Mark* 16. 15, 16. *John* 3. 17, 18. But Justification cannot be affirmed of Unbelievers universally; Would it not be accounted a mad evidencing of Justification by Faith, to argue thus, All Unbelievers are justified: But I am an Unbeliever, *Ergo*, I am justified? where the major is false confestly; and the minor also must needs be false, because he is supposed to be a Believer that makes the Syllogism, and therefore the conclusion must run mad: And if Faith can onely evidence that he that believes is justified, then can it not evidence any Justification before Believing.

Peradventure it may be said (which onely can be said) That Faith may evidence Justification Syllogistically, thus, All the elect are justified: But (saith a Believers Conscience) *I am elect*, *Ergo*, (saith the same Conscience)

ence) *I am justified*: To which I might answer, That the major is utterly false; but because that is the Question, I meddle not with it. To the minor I answer by denying it, Because we speak not now of what is true in it self (in which sense I acknowledge it to be true, that he that believes is elected) but of what is truly evidenced by Faith; and Faith cannot truly evidence Election before it hath evidenced Justification: For I renew the same Argument thus, Faith doth evidence Election Axiomatically or Syllogistically; not Axiomatically, for the Scriptures no where speak to particular persons, Thou *Peter* or *Thomas*, &c. art Elected.: If Syllogistically, then either by something before Election, or by the consequences and effects of it. Before Election there is nothing to evidence it by; and if Faith must evidence it by its effects, then it evidenceth Justification before Election, because Justification is one of the effects of Election. In the mean time, what a miserable circle is the poor restless doubting soul conjured into, through the want of its Evidence, and knows not where to finde it! his Faith must first evidence his Justification by his Election, and then it must evidence his Election by his Justification, till in the issue this new Gospel leave him without all Evidence of Eternal Life.

2. But the very truth is, it is not Faith which doth evidence Syllogistically, and it is most absurd to say we are justified by Faith, because Faith doth evidence our Justification Syllogistically; let the Argument be this, If we are said to be justified by Faith, because Faith doth evidence Justification Syllogistically, then we may be said to be justified by sense and reason, as well as by Faith,

Faith, which is absurd: The reason is, because sense and reason concur with Faith in a Syllogistical evidence; for clearing of which, let us again set before us the former Syllogism, *He that believeth is justified*; But I believe, Therefore I am justified: The Major onely is the assent or act of Faith: The Assumption, an act of sense or spiritual Experience: The Conclusion, an act of Reason, That he that believes is justified; this Faith doth evidence: That I believe, is evidenced to me by mine own Spiritual Experience: That therefore I am justified, is the evidence of Reason, inferring the Conclusion out of the premises; wherefore Faith must be said to justify in some other respect, then that it doth evidence Iustification, or else we cannot be said to be justified by Faith at all.

A third Argument to prove that the Iustification by Faith is not meerly a Iustification in our Consciences, is this:

That Interpretation of the Phrase which makes us, at least concurrent causes with God, in the formal act of our own Iustification, is not true: The reason is, because our Iustification by Faith, in regard of the formal act of pronouncing us just, is in Scripture attributed wholly unto God: *It is God that justifieth*, Rom. 8. 33. that *imputeth Righteousness*, Rom. 4. 6, 8. We do no more justify our selves then we glorify our selves: It is God alone doth both, and we are passive in both, Rom. 8. 30.

But to interpret our Justification by Faith, meerly for a Iustification in our own Consciences, is to make us (at least) concurrent causes with God, in the formal act of our own Iustification; This is so clear that it needs no proof:

proof: For us to be justified in our own Consciences; what is it but for our own Consciences to pronounce us just? and what is this but for our selves to justify our selves? And so our Iustification by Faith is not Gods act onely, but our own also in part: It is true that the Spirit of God doth justify us in our own Consciences, but not without the concurrent testimony and justification of our Consciences: The Spirit (*συμμαρτυρεῖ*) beareth witness (not to our Spirits, but) with our Spirits; verily if our hearts condemn us, we can have no evidence nor assurance before God, 1 *John* 3. 19, 20, 21.

You know what was here excepted, *viz.* That if we were altogether passive in being justified, then we are Iustified before we believe: An exception so childish, That if all Error were not a piece of witchery, I should wonder it should proceed out of that mouth. To believe, is indeed a formal vital act of the soul, *in genere physico*; but the use of it in Iustification, is to qualifie us passively, that we may be morally and orderly capable of being justified by another, even by God, the great Judge of life and death: Will any sober man impute to us, that because we maintain Justification by Faith in this sense, therefore we set up our selves as Iudges together with God of our own souls? or that we have therefore a joynt concurrence with him, in making that gracious Law, by and according to which we are justified, or in pronouncing a sentence of Absolution upon our selves? He would be thought more worthy to be derided then disputed with, that should infer, Because some Offenders against our Laws are not capable of Pardon, unless they can read the Book; therefore he that reads, must needs be one

of the State in making that Law; or a Iudge with his Iudge in absolving himself according to that Law: If a Magistrate grant a pardon to an Offender upon condition that he accept it, his acceptance is indeed his own act; yet in a Moral consideration, 'tis onely a passive condition making him capable of being pardoned according to the Magistrates will (though a man have in himself more ability to read and accept of a Pardon, then a sinner hath to believe) and no man (I trow) will say that by his acceptance he is a concurrent cause in the formal act of his own Absolution: In like maner we say, we are not social causes with God, either in making the law of Grace, or in pronouncing our selves just according to that law (and therefore Iustification by Faith cannot be onely justification in Conscience) yet Faith is required on our part, which though Physically it be an act, yet morally it is but a passive condition, by which we are made capable of being justified, according to the order and constitution of God: It is God that glorifies us, and not we our selves, yet surely God doth not glorifie us before we believe.

I shall adde but one thing more, which I wish may be seriously considered: If Iustification by Faith must be understood of justification in our Consciences, then is not the word Iustification taken properly for a justification before God, in all the Scriptures, from the beginning to the end: We read of no justification in Scripture, but by Faith or Works; when the Scriptures speak of justification by Works, Mr. *Eyre* says it must be understood of a justification before men; when it speaks of justification by Faith, he says in like maner,
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it must be understood of a justification before our own Consciences, & neither of these the justification before God, and verily, neither of them of much worth in the Apostles judgement, 1 *Cor.* 4. 3. And yet of any other justification before God, which is neither of these two, we do not read in all the Scripture; The Antinomians may read their eyes out before they produce us one Text for it: And what a most incredible thing is it, that a word so often used, should never be read in its most natural and true signification? and that so glorious a Blessing as Justification before God, should never be mentioned by its own name in all the Bible? yea verily, the whole comfort of this inestimable Blessing will be utterly taken from us, for if the Scripture doth not say that any man is justified before God, then no mans Faith can evidence to him that he is justified before God: And if Justification by Faith be not Justification before God, then is there no Justification before God for any man living promised in Scripture: peradventure they may grant that Justification in this or that place is meant of Justification before God, but their grant doth neither make nor mar, if the evidence of the Text do not compel and convince the understanding.

Having thus cleared the coast of this Exception, which for ought I can see is the onely Obstruction in the way; I pass on to propound some Arguments, by which it may be proved, That we are justified by Faith in the sight of God, and not before.

The first is drawn from the nature of Justification, which is an Absolution of a Sinner from Condemnation, by that gracious Sentence and signal Promise in

the Gospel, *He that believes shall not enter into condemnation* : We are not to conceive of Iustification as an internal immanent act of God, resolving privatly in his own brest, nor to prosecute his right against a Sinner, but it must be some declared, promulged act, which may be our legal discharge from the accusation & condemnation of the Law ; for as sin is not imputed where there is no Law, *Rom. 5. 13.* so neither is Righteousness imputed without Law. And as our condemnation is no secret act or resolution of God to condemn, but the very voice and sentence of the Law, *Cursed is he that sinneth* (and therefore he whom God in his eternal Decree hath purposed to save, may yet for the present be under the sentence of condemnation, as the *Ephesians*, whom God had chosen to eternal Life, *Eph. 1. 4.* were yet sometimes the *children of wrath*, chap. 2. 3.) so on the contrary, our Iustification must be some declared, promulged act or sentence of God, which may stand good in Law, for the discharge of the sinner from condemnation. Indeed to our private forgiveness one of another, it being meerly an act of Charity, there is no more required, then a Resolution within our selves to lay aside our thoughts of revenge, and not to prosecute our right against him that hath injured us. But the forgiveness of a Magistrate being an act of Authority, must be by some formal Act of Oblivion, by which all former Acts and Orders against Delinquents may be invalidated ; A Vote in the House, or a Declaration that such an Act shall come forth, is no legal security to a Delinquent. So then, Gods forgiveness being an Act of Authority, must neither be an hidden secret purpose in his own heart, nor a meer promise

mise or Declaration of an act of Pardon that shall be made hereafter, but a formal Act of Pardon it must be, that shall make the Law of condemnation to be of no force against him that pleads it. And this formal Act of Pardon can be no other then the sentence of the Gospel, *He that believes shall be saved*, which is sometimes called the *Law of Faith*, Rom. 3. 27. sometimes the *Law of Righteousness*, Rom. 9. 31. in reference to which it is that the Lord says, *He that believes is passed from death to life*, John. 5. 24. so that as every man is then condemned when the Law condemns him (whatsoever the purposes of God may be, unknown to us) so on the contrary, a man is then justified when the Gospel justifies him, and not before.

The Argument then is in sum this,

If there be no Act of Grace declared and published in the word, which may be a legal discharge of the Sinner while he is in unbelief, then no unbelieving Sinner is justified: The reason is, because Justification imports a legal discharge of the Sinner, by some Act of Grace declared and published in the Gospel.

But there is no Act of Grace declared and published in the Word, which may be a legal discharge of the Sinner while he remains in unbelief. *Ergo*, If there be any such Act, let it be produced.

2. The second Argument is this: They that are under condemnation, cannot at the same time be justified; but all the world is under condemnation before Faith, *Ergo*, none of the world are justified before Faith: The major must needs be true, because justification and condemnation are contraries, and contraries cannot be verified of the same subject at the same time. Justifica-

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tion is a moral life, and Condemnation a moral death; a man can no more be in a justified Estate and a state of Condemnation both at once, then he can be alive or dead both at once, or a blessed man and a cursed man both at once. What? that the Apostle describes justification by non-condemnation, *Rom. 8. 1.* and opposeth it unto condemnation, as inconsistent with the same person at the same time, *ver. 33, 34.* and are at as mortal enmity one with another, as good and evil, light and darkness.

But now that all the world is under condemnation before Faith (which is the *minor*) are the very words of the Lord Jesus, *John 3. 18. He that believeth not is condemned already*: The Lord is proving that he came not into the world to condemn the world; he proves it by a disjunction thus, then either he must condemn them that believe, or them that do not believe; not them that believe, For he that believeth is not condemned; nor them that do not believe, For *he that believeth not is condemned already*, to wit, by the sentence of the Law, *Cursed is every one that sinneth*; so that Christ should not need to come into the world to condemn it, which is also the meaning of that other phrase, *verse 36. He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him*; that is, the wrath of God by the Law is upon every sinner, yet not so necessarily, but that by believing he may escape it; but if he believeth not, then the wrath of God abideth on him, the sentence of the Law shall stand good against him for ever. If then it be objected, that when it is said, *He that believeth not is condemned*; condemnation must be understood of the condemnation of Conscience, not before God;

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I Answer, 1. The condemnation here spoken of, is the condemnation of the Law, and that pronounceth all men guilty, not onely in their own conscience, but before God, *Rom. 3. 19. That all the world may become guilty before God.* 2. The condemnation in conscience of the unbelieving world, is either true or false; If true, then it is according to the judgement of God, and speaks as the thing is, and so God condemns as well as the conscience; and in this case we may say as *Johndoth, 1 Joh 3. 20. If our hearts condemn us, God is greater then our hearts and knoweth all things,* and by consequence doth much more condemn us; If false, then (seeing all the unbelieving world is under the same condemnation) the conscience of an unbeliever when it condemns him for drunkenness, adultery, swearing, &c. is erroneous; and the way to comfort them, is to persuade them so, and thereby to blinde their eyes, and harden their hearts, and sear up their consciences, that they may never see nor be affected with sin, till they fall irrecoverably into everlasting flames, 3. The condemnation with which the unbeliever is condemned, is expressed *verse 36.* by the abiding of the wrath of God upon him, 4. It is also opposed unto salvation, *verse 17. God sent not his Son to condemn the world, but to save it;* and surely the condemnation which is opposed to Salvation, is more then the condemnation of a mans own conscience; for that may very well consist with Salvation; yea they that are saved, are for the most part more subject to it in this life, then they that perish.

3. A third Argument is drawn from the several comparisons by which justification by Faith is illustrated: Some-

Sometimes 'tis compared to the Israelites looking up to the Brazen Serpent for healing, *Joh. 3. 14. & Num. 21. 8, 9.* As then they were not first healed, and then looked up to see what healed them; but they did first look upon the Serpent, and then they were healed: Even so is it the will of God, *That whosoever seeth and believeth the Son, shall be justified,* *Iohn 6. 40.* He is not first justified and then seeth the Son; sometimes Faith is compared to eating, and Iustification to the nourishment which we receive by our meat, *John 6. 51, 52, 53, 54.* We are not first nourished and then eat the meat that nourisheth us; but we eat our meat that we may be nourished by it. In like maner we are not first justified, and then believe on Christ that hath justified us; but we believe in Christ that we may be justified.

4. A fourth Argument is drawn from the perpetual opposition between Faith and Works, from whence the Argument is this, What place and order Works had to justification in the Covenant of Works, the same place and order Faith hath to our Iustification in the Covenant of Grace: But Works were to go before our Iustification in the Covenant of Works, *Ergo*, Faith is to go before our Iustification in the Covenant of Grace: To the *minor* I say nothing, because there is not a man in the world that doth deny it as I know of, and that being granted, the *major* also must be out of question: If the tenor of the first Covenant, *Do this and live*, by the consent of all People and Nations, Jews and Gentiles, will undeniably evince that Works were necessary Antecedents of justification in that Covenant; why then should not, *Believe in the Lord Jesus*

Jesus, and thou shalt be saved (which is the tenor of the New Covenant, *Rom. 10. 6, 9.*) plead as strongly for the like necessity of the Antecedency of Faith to justification in this Covenant? 2. Faith and Works have the like order to Justification in their respective Covenants, or else Justification by Faith and Justification by Works are not opposed; for *Opposita sunt circa idem*. The Jews looked after Righteousness by the Works of the Law, The Apostle tells them they must seek it by Faith; Now, if they say we must be justified by Works, to wit, formally and before God; and the Apostle say, Nay, but we must be justified by Faith, to wit, declaratively, and before Conscience; then the establishing of Justification by Faith, will not destroy Justification by Works; and so there will be nothing but falsehoods and equivocations, in all the Apostles Disputations against Justification by Works: And how easily might the Jews and the Apostle have been reconciled? They say, We must be justified by Works; and he says, We must be justified by Faith; it is but distinguishing; Works do justify us before God, but Faith must evidence and declare this to us, and they are agreed.

5. Adde further what the Apostle says, *1 Cor. 6. 11.* *Such were some of you, but you are washed, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus:* Where the opposition between the time past and the time present, doth evidently argue that the words have this sense, Such and such you were in time past (Fornicators, Idolaters, &c. and therefore must have been shut out of the Kingdom of God *verse 10.*) But (*Now*) you are washed: (*Now*) and not before, you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, that is, through Faith in

his name: compare *Acts* 3. 16. and 10. 43. If then the Corinthians were not justified before Faith, Why are Englishmen? It is to no purpose to say here, That now they were declared in their own Consciences to be justified, and so they were not before, whiles they lived in those abominable sins. For 1. Why may not we understand the word (*Sanctified*) in the same sense, seeing we are said to be sanctified by Faith, *Acts* 26. 18. and 15. 9. *1 Pet.* 1. 22. as well as justified by Faith? And to suppose that these Corinthians had a seed of Grace before, but buried under the dirt and rubbish of vile sins, till by Faith they came to see that they were sanctified: There is nothing can be alledged for Justification before believing, which will not hold as strongly for Sanctification before believing; nor any reason why Sanctification should not be understood for a Sanctification declared, as well as Justification for a Justification declared. 2. The Justification which they now had, was that which gave them right and title to the Kingdom of God, which right and title they had not before, no more then others that did yet continue in Idolatry, Fornication, Uncleanness, and the other sins specified: It is acknowledged of all hands, that Justification includes an adjudging of us unto life, or a giving us a right to the Heavenly Kingdom; if then these Corinthians had this right before they believed, then did their Faith give them no more security of Salvation in point of right then they had before; or then might be affirmed of them who did yet abide in their sins, and by consequence, if they had lived and dyed in their sins, they might have gone to Heaven notwithstanding; though for want of Faith, to see this their right,

right, they could not have departed with so much comfort of Spirit: For if Faith do onely declare that we have a Title to the Heavenly Kingdom, then it makes no relative change in our condition, from a state of death into a state of life; and so whether we believe or no, all is one as to the certainty of our salvation, though we want the evidence and perswasion of it. If it be here said, That all whom God in his secret Justification hath adjudged unto life, shall have the evidence thereof by Faith: I Answer, This evidence is of such necessity, as that if they have it not, they shall lose that life to which they are adjudged, or no; If not, then whether they believe or do not believe, they shall be saved: If it be, then is there no absolute Justification before Faith, and Justification must be conditional, and the immediate and absolute right to life must be acknowledged to be a consequent of Faith, which will at once overthrow Mr. Eyles Opinion, and confirm this Argument without any more ado.

What remains to be done, is to remove those Objections which seem of weight to Mr. Eyle for confirmation of his Opinion.

The first is drawn from those Scriptures which seem to hold forth an immediate actual reconciliation of sinners to God upon the death of Christ, without the intervention of Faith: As *Matth. 3. 17. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,* viz, with sinners, and *Rom. 5. 10. We were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son.*

Ans. To the former of these places I answer: 1. That the well-pleasedness of God need not be extended beyond the person of Christ, who gave himself

unto the death, an offering and a sacrifice unto God of a sweet smelling savor, Eph. 5. 2. 2. If we should extend it also unto men (which is neither necessary nor probable) yet will the words prove no more, then that it is through Christ that God is well pleased with men, whensoever it be that he is well pleased: Verbs and Participles of the present Tense (though the Verb in this place be not the present Tense, but the first Aorist) have sometimes the signification of the future Tense, as *John 4. 25. The Messiah cometh*, that is, will shortly come; and *chap. 5. 25. The hour is coming, and now is*, that is, will shortly be; and *14. 3. If I go, I come again* (so in the Greek) that is, I will come again, *2 Cor. 3. 16. When it* (namely Israel) *shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away*: The Verbs in the Greek are both of the present Tense, hundreds of the like instances are obvious; sometimes they are Notes of affirmation without reference to any determinate time, as *Rom. 8. 24. By hope we are saved*; not presently, for it follows immediately, *hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?* Ergo, To be saved by hope, imports that a man is not yet saved; but the meaning is, That it is in the way of hope and patient expectation that men are saved, whensoever it be that they are saved: So *1 Cor. 13. 57. Thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory*; to wit, the victory over death by and in the Resurrection, and the meaning is, That it is through God that we have the Victory, be it when it will be that we have it; for if the words must needs be understood as if we had the Victory presently, then *Paul*, and the Christians of his age, were raised before they were dead; and the Christians of follow-
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ing ages before they were born: So *Heb. 10. 35.* Your confidence hath a great recompence of reward, that is, shall have, *Jam. 1. 17.* Every good gift cometh down from above, nor as if it must needs be coming down when the Apostle spake those words; but that whensoever any receives a good gift, it is from God: But why do we fight against God? Is it not the testimony of the holy Ghost as express as words can deliver it, *that without Faith it is impossible to please God*, or to be pleasing unto God, as *Enoch* was by Faith, *Heb. 11. 5, 6.* It was a poor answer that *Mr. Eyre* gave to *Mr. Good*, when he asked him, Whether God were well pleased with unregenerate men, to say, He was well pleased with unregenerate men, but not with their unregeneracy; as if God were well pleased with unregenerate men, whiles unregenerate, but afterwards were well pleased with their unregeneracy.

The like answer I give to *Ques.* 5. To what we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, to wit, That Christ's death was the price of our Reconciliation, and so it is through the death of Christ that we are reconciled; be it when it will be that we are reconciled: Here then we must distinguish, as it were of three Periods of the will of God; 1. As it may be conceived, immediately after sin committed, before the consideration of the death of Christ: And now is the Lord at enmity with the sinner, though not averse from all ways and means, by which he may return to Friendship with him again. 2. As it may be conceived after the consideration of the death of Christ, and now is the Lord not only appeasable, but doth also promise that he will be reconciled with sinners, upon such terms as him-

himself shall propose. 3. As the same will of God may be considered after an intercession on Christs part, and Faith on the sinners part, and now is God actually reconciled and in Friendship with the sinner, when then the Apostle says, *We are reconciled through the death of Christ*, he doth not mean, That immediatly upon the death of Christ we are actually reconciled unto God (for in the very next verse he saith, That through Christ *we have now* (and not before) *received the atonement*, or reconciliation, which in plainer terms is this, That now, that is, since we are Believers, we are actually reconciled unto God.) But his meaning is, That through the death of Christ it is, that the promise of reconciliation is made, by and according to which we are actually reconciled unto God after we believe, suitable to that of the Lord Jesus, *This is the New Testament in my blood* (obtained and sealed by my blood) *which was shed for the remission of the sins of many*, Matth. 26. 28. The ground of all this is, because the death of Christ was not *salutio ejusdem*, but *tantidem*, not the payment of that which was in the obligation, but of the equivalent, being not the payment of the debtor, but of the surety, and therefore it doth not deliver us *ipso facto*, but according to the compact and agreement between the Father & him, when he undertook to be our surety. If a debtor bring me what he owes me, it dischargeh him presently, but the payment of a surety, is a payment refusable of it self, and therefore effects not the discharge of the principal debtor, but at the time, and according to the conditions agreed upon between the Surety and the Creditor. If then our Adversaries could prove, either that it was
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the will of God in giving up Christ to the death, or the will of Christ in giving himself to the death, that this death of his should be available to the immediate and actual Reconciliation and Justification of the sinner, without any condition performed on the sinners part, it were something to the purpose: But till this be done (which indeed can never be done) they were as good say nothing: When Christ gives us an account both of his own and his Fathers will in this matter, he tells us, That this is the will of him that sent him, *That whosoever seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life*, John 6. 40. without which Faith, Christ shall profit us nothing, Gal. 5. 4. 1 John 5. 11, 12. *He that hath not the Son hath not life*. So much for that Objection.

The next (which was one of the two made use of against me after Sermon) is this;

Object. 2. *If we are justified in Christ, then we are justified before we believe: But we are justified in Christ. Ergo.*

Ans. We may conceive of a Threefold Justification. 1. A Justification purposed in the decree of God, Gal. 3. 8. *The Scriptures foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles through Faith*. 2. A Justification purchased and impetrated in the death of Christ, who by his death hath obtained eternal Redemption for us, Heb. 9. 12. which Redemption is the Remission of sins, Eph. 1. 7. 3. There is also a Justification exemplified in the resurrection of Christ, who himself was justified in his own resurrection, & thereby became the exemplary cause of Justification to believers, by virtue of which themselves shall also be justified in such time,

time, and upon such terms as shall be agreed upon between the Father and Christ ! (I use the term of an exemplary cause, rather then of a common person, because a common person may be the effect of those whom he represents (as the Parliament of the Commonwealth) but Christ is such a common person, as that he is the cause of those whom he represents in every thing in which he represents them) so that when we say, We are justified in Christ, the meaning is no more but this, That Christ is made the cause and patern, according to which Justification shall certainly follow on them that believe : But what is this to our deliverance from condemnation ? or what benefit do we receive by it before we believe ? Should a man argue thus in any other benefits we receive by Christ and from Christ as the exemplary cause, he would make himself deservedly ridiculous. For example, We are said to be risen with Christ, Christ himself being risen from the dead, and *become the first fruits of them that slept*, 1 Cor. 15. 20. So that Christ in his resurrection, is the exemplary cause of our resurrection, in which we are therefore said to *bear the Image of the heavenly Adam*, *verse 49*. Would any sober man infer, Therefore our own personal resurrection is past already, to wit, before our selves are dead; or that we are not to be raised at all, because we are risen already in Christ ? Yet no man living can shew any reason of difference why we may not as justly infer that our resurrection is passed already, because we are risen in Christ ; as that our Justification is past before we believe; because we are justified in Christ : No doubt but most men would account the just contrary a necessary consequence. Again

We are sanctified in Christ as well as justified in Christ, *Our old man is crucified with him*, Rom. 6. 6. and he is said to be made *Sanctification* to us as well as Righteousness, 1 Cor. 1. 30. And why then may we not inveigh against Regeneration & personal Sanctification, as well as against personal Justification? for if we are sanctified in Christ, then we are sanctified before Faith, and we need not mortifie sin and dye to the world; &c. all this is done already in Christ, in whom we are sanctified before Faith, we need onely to have it declared to us, that we are sanctified. To draw up the Answer more close; Justification is either causal and virtual, or actual and formal: The former is no other then a Justification of Christ himself; with a connotation of others, who by vertue of this Justification of his, are themselves to be justified in due time; as our resurrection in Christ is nothing else but Christ himself risen, as the first fruits of them that slept, and so become the exemplary cause of a resurrection afterwards to follow in us; but as the resurrection of Christ makes no real change in us till our selves be risen; so neither doth the justification of Christ make any moral change in us from death to life, till our selves be justified: Actual and formal justification is, when we are acquitted from the guilt of sin by the gracious sentence of the Gospel, *He that believes shall not enter into condemnation*: Now then if we speak of Justification formal, then I deny that we are justified in Christ (which is the opponents Assumption.) And if we speak of Justification causal, then I do utterly deny the Proposition; *viz.* That if we are justified in Christ, then we are justified before we believe; the Reason is, because to be justified in

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Christ, is not to be justified simply (no more then to be risen in Christ, is to be risen simply, or to be glorified in Christ, is to be glorified simply) and therefore the inference is *à dicto secundum quid, ad dictum simpliciter*: They are credulous souls I'll assure you, that will be drawn by such Decoys as these into Schism and Faction, to the hardening and discomforting of more hearts in one hour, then the Opinion it self (should it obtain) will do good to while the world stands.

Object. 3. The last and great Argument succeeds, and that is this: If we are in Covenant before we believe, then we are justified before we believe: But we are in Covenant before we believe. Ergo.

Ans. Were it supposed that we were in Covenant before Faith, yet would the Proposition be faulty: The reason is, because the Blessings of the Covenant have an order and dependance one upon another, and are enjoyed successively one after another: God in his Covenant promises Holiness and Glory as well as Justification; yet he would argue most absurdly that should say, We are sanctified and glorified before Faith, because we are in Covenant before Faith: But I am unwilling to multiply quarrels: If the great difference lay here, it were an easie matter to be reconciled.

2. I do utterly deny the Assumption, *viz.* That we are in Covenant with God before we believe; if at least the Phrase of being in Covenant be understood, properly, for such an interest in the Covenant as gives a man right and title to the Blessings of the Covenant: that in this sense we are not in Covenant before we believe, is that which I shall prove by and by. But first, I shall give Mr. Eyre a fair hearing, though he would

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not give it me, and I believe is resolved to give it to no body else, whiles the judgement of the cause must be left to the people.

The proof of the Assumption stands thus : If the Spirit be given us before we believe, then we are in Covenant before we believe : But the Spirit is given us before we believe : *Ergo*, the proof of the *minor* is from the tenor of the New Covenant, *Heb. 8. 10, 11. I will put my laws into their minde, and they shall all know me*, which is a promise of giving the Spirit to work Faith.

Ans. The Explication of the terms of this Argument is a sufficient refutation of it : God is said to give in Scripture, sometimes when no receiving follows, and thus the word (Give) signifies no more then the will of God, constituting and appointing : Thus God (gave) his Son unto death, that is, constituted and appointed that he should die : There is no other name (given) under Heaven, *Acts 4. 12.* that is, no other name appointed ; so *Eph. 1. 22.* and *4. 11.* and a hundred other places : In this sense, the giving of the Spirit is no more then the sending, and as it were the constituting of the Spirit, to be by way of specialty the worker and cause of Faith. 2. The word (give) doth sometimes include a receiving and possession of the thing given, as in the ordinary use of the word ; and thus the Spirit is given when we receive him, and are as it were possessors of him, and he becomes ours, and dwells in us : Thus the Lord promiseth to *give the spirit to them that ask him*, *Luke 11. 13.* and we are said to *receive the spirit by Faith*, *Gal. 3. 14.* and the Spirit is said to dwell in us by Faith, *Eph. 3. 16, 17.* with *Rom. 8. 10, 11.*

and of this latter way of giving the Spirit, is the Question to be understood.

2. The Spirit may be said to be given three ways ;
 1. Essentially. 2. Personally. 3. In reference to his operations : The Spirit is not given to us essentially, for so he is God, and is equally every where, nor can he be more peculiarly in one, then in another: Nor 2. Personally ; for that cannot be conceived without a personal union, which would denominate us as truly to be the Spirit of God, as the like union in the man Christ Jesus did denominate him to be the Son of God.
 3. The Spirit therefore must be said to be given to us, in regard of some peculiar operations which he worketh in us, which are incommunicable to those which have not the Spirit : so that common convictions, illuminations, humiliations, some joys of heart, & the like, which are transient Works of the Spirit, common to them that are saved and to them that perish, *Heb. 6. 4. Matth. 13. 20.* and all other works which may either go before or be without Faith; these are none of them such kinde of works, as that in respect of them the Spirit should be said to be given to us : wherefore there being no peculiar work of grace before Faith it self, which may not be wrought in a hypocrite (which hath not the Spirit) as well as in a childe of God; therefore the Spirit is neither given nor received before Faith be wrought, but is given and received together with Faith in the same instant of time, and not before. Indeed, as every cause is in nature before its effect; so the Spirit also in order of causes is before Faith, but that he is therefore given to us in the least atome of time before the being of Faith, is a meer *non-sequitur*, and contrary to the
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received maxime, *Posita causa in actu, ponitur effectus*; which rule Mr. Eyre hath often abused, to prove a Justification immediatly upon the death or resurrection of Christ, and yet here he cannot understand it; so that as a man doth first build himself an house, and then dwells in it: So the Lord Jesus by his Spirit doth *οικονομεῖν οἶκον* Heb. 3. 3. build, and organize, and prepare, (as we render the Greek word, Luke 1. 17.) the soul to be a house unto himself, and then by the same Spirit dwells in it immediatly. And this is that which I would have spoken publicly in answer to this Argument, if Mr. Eyre had not been beyond measure obstreperous. Yet here it may be demanded, *Whether Faith is selfe be not given to us by vertue of the Covenant made with us.*

Ans. Faith is not given to us by vertue of the Covenant made with us, but by vertue of the Covenant made with Christ; that is, God hath promised and covenanted with Christ, that if he will lay down his life for the redemption of sinners, those sinners shall be drawn to believe in Christ, and thereby to partake of the benefits of his death: That this is so, the Scriptures are plain, Isa. 53. 10. *When thou shalt make his soul an offering for him, he shall see his seed: He shall see of the travel of his soul, by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many;* so Isa. 55. 4, 5. *Behold thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, & nations that knew not thee, shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the holy One of Israel, for he hath glorified thee,* Psal. 2. 8. *Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, &c.* So Psal. 110. 3. *Matth. 12. 21.* And why did the Lord appoint Apostles and Ministers to carry the sound of the Gospel from one end
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of the earth to the other, and subdueth Nations to the obedience of the Faith, but that he may accomplish his promises made to his Son: such as are recorded in *Psal. 89. 25, 26, &c.*

Now to the words of the Covenant, *Jer. 31. 31.* repeated by the Apostle, *Heb. 8. 10.* *This is the Covenant that I will make with the House of Israel: I will put my laws into their mindes, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.* From whence Mr. Eyre infers, That the Spirit and Faith is given by vertue of the Covenant made with us.

But I answer, 1. That if Mr. Eyre will urge the words of this Text rigorously, they would prove more then he would have: For it is manifest, That this Covenant contains a promise of sending Christ into the world, and giving him up to death for our sins; as the Apostle doth directly prove, *Heb. 10. 14, 15, 16.* and why then may it not be inferred, That the elect are in Covenant with God, not only before they believe, but also before the death of the Mediator, and so his death was not to obtain all or any of the blessings of the Covenant, but onely (as the Socinians) to declare and confirm to us, That we may believe, that God of his own meer good will, without expecting any satisfaction, will do all this good for us; for if it be a good consequence, We are in Covenant before we believe, because the Covenant promiseth to give us Faith; Then is this also a good consequence, We are in covenant before the death of Christ, because the Covenant promiseth to give Christ to death. And what answer Mr. Eyre will give to avoid this consequence (for I presume he will not grant it) and to defend his position, That we
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are in Covenant with God upon the death of Christ, and not before, notwithstanding the Covenant promise to give Christ, the same Answer will serve my turn for the vindication of my Assertion, That we are in Covenant with God upon believing, and not before, notwithstanding the same Covenant promise Faith.

2. But upon a most serious perusal of this Text, I finde it so contradictory to Mr. Eyre's purpose, that I cannot but wonder what he means to shelter his Opinion under the protection of it: If we read the words in *Heb. 8. 10.* or *Fer. 31. 33.* and compare them with other places of Scripture, we shall finde three things of distinct consideration, the confusion of which is the only support of this feeble Argument; 1. There is the matter and blessings of the Covenant on Gods part, *I will be their God, & they shall be my people:* In which words, as many blessings temporal and eternal are promised; so peculiarly pardon of sin, mentioned in the words next following (for which the Covenant on Mount *Sinai*, to which this opposed, made no provision) and therefore when the Apostle mentioneth this Covenant again, he leaves out those words, *I will be their God, &c.* and takes notice of the great blessing contained in them, namely, Pardon of sin, *Heb. 10. 17.* 2. There is expressed the bond and condition of it on our part, and that is, Faith; which is confessedly signified in those words, of putting Gods Laws in our mindes, and writing them in our hearts: In these two things is the tenor and formality of the New Covenant: They that believe, the Lord will be their God, and they shall be his people; and this is the Covenant so long before promised, but most expressly Enacted in the days of the
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New Testament. But thirdly, There is also a Promise and Declaration that God will work this condition, by which, men shall have an interest in this Covenant, and a right and title to the blessings thereof: *I will put my laws into their mindes*, that is, I will give them Faith; which Faith is not promised as an effect of the Covenant already made, but as the means by which we are brought into Covenant, and thereby invested in a right to all the blessings of it: So that the words are in this sense, This is the Covenant which I will make with the house of *Israel*, when I shall write my Laws in their hearts, I will be their God, &c. I do not herein give the Grammatical Translation of the words; though if a man should read the words thus, This is the Covenant which I will make, saith the Lord, that giveth his Laws into their mindes, and writeth them in their heart, &c. he would be so far from offering violence, either to the Greek Translation of the LXX, which the Apostle follows, or to the Hebrew Text in the Prophet, as that he might justifie it by many examples. But the matter is of no consequence at all to either side: You see the sense which I give of the words.

And that this is the true sense of the place, is most evident, if we compare it with other Scriptures where this Covenant is mentioned: For example, *Jer. 24. 7. I will give them an heart to know me that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God*: for (or when) they shall *return unto me with their whole heart*, where we have the very same Arguments as here, *viz.* The blessings promised, *I will be their God*: The condition on the peoples part, which is their returning with their whole heart, and the cause of this return, *I will*

give them an heart: The Apostle is yet more distinct, Heb. 10. 14, 15, 16, 17. He proves that Christ hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified; whereof (saith he) the holy Ghost is a witness to us; for after that he had said before, *This is the Covenant that I will make with them, I will put my laws into their heart --- And their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more*: Before which last words must be repeated these (*Then he saith*) or (*Then it followeth*) and so the whole sentence runneth thus, For after he had said before, *I will put my laws into their hearts*; then he saith, *Their sins & their iniquities I wil remember no more*; which claute (as is already observed) is one of the special and noble blessings contained in that general promise, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people*; from which distribution of the words of the Covenant, we may (as before) observe, 1. Where begins the grand promise of the Covenant, to wit, in those words, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people*. 2. The Qualification of the persons to whom this promise is made; They are such in whose hearts Gods Laws are written, that is, such as believe. 3. The efficient cause of this their Faith, and that is, God himself, *I will write my laws in their hearts*: The same Covenant is delivered in other terms in Scripture, in all which the giving of the first Grace is promised, not as a part of the Covenant, but as the means and qualification on mans part for his entrance into Covenant, as *Ezek. 11. 19, 20. I wil put a new spirit within them, that they may walk in my statutes and do them, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God*, which is the sum of the Covenant on Gods part; so in *Ezek. 36. 25, 26, 27, 28. Again, the Lord promiset, That he will cleanse and purifie them; and so they shall be his people, and he will be their God, Ezek. 37. 23. which is the grand promise of the New Testament, as the*

context makes it manifest: And after he had promised that they should walk in his judgements, and observe his statutes, it follows, Moreover, *I will make a Covenant of peace with them, it shall be an everlasting Covenant, which in sum is this, I will be their God, and they shall be my people,* verse 24, 26, 27.

The premises being considered, it is an easie matter to take the elevation of all the strength which our opponents can gather out of this Text: If they will argue rightly, they must cast their Argument into some such form as this, They concerning whom God hath promised that he will give them Faith, they are in Covenant before they believe: But concerning the elect, God hath promised that he will give them Faith. *Ergo*, Here the *major* is utterly untrue; for the promise of Faith (which in reference to us is rather a Declaration, *de futuro*, of what God will do, then a promise) is the promise of the condition by which we are brought into Covenant, and therefore, though God hath declared that he will give Faith, it will by no means follow that we are in Covenant before Faith: But let them frame their Argument how they please; it concerns not me to be solicitous about that. I shall advance one Argument against them from this their place of refuge, and pass on: If God be not the God of any, nor they his people before they believe, then none are in Covenant with God before they believe: But God is not the God of any before they believe. *Ergo*, For the proposition, he is destitute of common sense that shall deny it: The being of the Covenant consists in that propriety which God hath in us, and we in him. The Assumption is proved thus, If God promise to give Faith, that we may be his people, & he our God, then till that Faith be given, he is not our God; nor we his people; for it is in vain for God to give faith for an end, which
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may be well enough attained without Faith: But God promiſeth to give Faith, that he may be our God and we his people, *Jer.* 31. 33. *Heb.* 8. 10. *Ezek.* 11. 19, 20, and 36. 25, 26, 27, 28. & 37. 23, 24, 26, 27. beſides multitudes of other Scriptures. I have onely one obſervation to adde, which the moſt learned amongſt the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Writers do often take notice of, and that is this: That God is never ſaid to be our God in reference to his giving of the firſt grace, but onely in reference to the bleſſings which he promiſeth to them that have Faith, *Heb.* 11. 16. He is not our God that he may give us Faith, but is every where ſaid to give us Faith, that he may be our God: *In times paſt you were not a people, but are now the people of God,* 1 *Pet.* 2. 10.

And now I might ſpare the pains of further proof of the poſition laſt defended; (4) yet to the Scriptures already advanced, let me adde a few more, *Iſa.* 55. 3. *Come unto me* (that is, Believe in me, *John* 6. 35.) *and I will make an everlaſting Covenant with you.* 2. The voice of the Goſpel (which is the Covenant of Grace) is every where, *Believe in the Lord Jeſus, and thou ſhalt be ſaved*; in oppoſition to the Covenant of Works, which ſaith, *Do this and live,* *Rom.* 10. 5, 6, 9. This is the covenant whereof Chriſt is Mediator, *Heb.* 9. 15. That *they that are called (unto Faith) ſhall receive the promiſe of the eternal inheritance.* 3. The Covenant of Grace is preached to every man, and every man called upon to fulfil the conditions of it, that he may receive the bleſſings of it, which condition is Faith, *Heb.* 4. 1, 2, 10. Is there an abſolute promiſe made to every man, that God will give him grace? or is it ſenſe to exhort men to *take hold of Gods Covenant* (as the phraſe is, *Iſa.* 56. 4, 6.) or to enter into Covenant with God, if the Covenant be onely an abſolute promiſe on Gods part? or to exhort men

(4) *Viz.*
That we
are not in
Covenant
before
Faith.

to be steadfast in the Covenant of God, to hold fast *the faith, and their confidence in Christ* : as the Scriptures are wont to do, *Heb. 3. 12, 13, 14.* and *10. 23.* or to accuse, and blame, and damn men for unbelief, and rejecting of the Gospel : Was it ever known that men should be counted worthy of death, for not being the objects of an absolute promise : 4. If the Covenant of grace be an absolute promise, then no men in the world but wicked & ungodly men are in covenant with God : When a covenant is fulfilled, it ceaseth to be any more a covenant. In this life we are properly said to be in covenant with God ; when we shall be perfected in glory in the heavenly kingdom, we cannot properly be said to be in covenant : Now absolute promises of grace are made onely to wicked men ; when grace is given them, then is the covenant so far forth fulfilled, and so far forth they cease to be in covenant, and so none but wicked men shall be perfectly in covenant with God : But it is beside my purpose & work to follow this pursuit any further.

Thus then you have with advantage, the Copy of the Sermon you have often desired ; to which, though it is likely something is or will be said (which at this distance I am never like to hear of) yet sure I am, that nothing can be answered consistent with the truth of Scriptures. I am sorry for the breaches that are amongst you, for the grief of the godly, and the hardning of multitudes to their own destruction. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus restore you to peace, and quiet that spirit of Division that is gone abroad amongst you : to his Grace I commend you, & rest.

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Teare in the nest of birds,
Benj: Woodbridge.

